



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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White Bear Lake man charged with growing more than 1,000 marijuana plants

A 27-year-old White Bear Lake man was charged yesterday by the United States Attorney's Office in connection with a marijuana growing operation involving more than 1,000 plants. Soua Vang was charged with one count of possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

According to a Drug Enforcement Administration affidavit, a White Bear Lake volunteer firefighter notified law enforcement on Jan. 26, 2008, regarding a home located on Michael Avenue, in White Bear Lake. The firefighter responded to a complaint of a citizen who believed the home might be on fire because the house's exterior had large amounts of condensation and there was a lack of snow on the roof. The firefighter concluded that the exterior of the home was hot to the touch, but observed no smoke or fire.

Vang was observed driving past the home and was later stopped by police. Officers told Vang they suspected his house may be on fire. Vang went inside the home and told officers that the house was warm because he had left the heat on too high, the affidavit stated.

A search warrant was executed on Feb. 11, and officers found a marijuana growing operation in the basement and in an unoccupied bedroom. The basement contained an estimated 1,000 marijuana plants, along with stems and remnants of marijuana plants indicating a recent marijuana harvest. Officers found Vang, along with his small child, in the basement and arrested him.

If convicted, Vang faces a potential maximum penalty of life imprisonment. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge. This case is the result of an investigation by the DEA, the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office and the police departments of Oakdale and White Bear Lake. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas M. Hollenhorst.

The defendant, of course, is presumed innocent until he or she pleads guilty or is proven guilty at trial.